

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER PLEDGES TO STEP DOWN IN MARCH 2004

Assembly Speaker [Herb Wesson](#) of Los Angeles said Monday (September 29) that he would step down from the post after the state's primary election next March. Earlier news stories reported that Wesson had informed the Assembly Democratic Caucus that he had no intention of resigning the speakership until term limits forced him out of office in November.

Wesson did qualify his announcement by saying he might retain the post if no replacement candidate could garner the necessary 41 votes. Names mentioned as possible Speaker candidates include [Jenny Oropeza](#) (D-Long Beach), [Dario Frommer](#) (D-Los Angeles), [Fabian Nunez](#) (D-Los Angeles), and [Joe Nation](#) (D-San Rafael).

Last month the Assembly Republicans unanimously selected first-term member [Kevin McCarthy](#) of Bakersfield as their Leader-Elect. McCarthy will assume the reins of power from current Assembly Republican Leader [Dave Cox](#) of Sacramento in January 2004.

ASSEMBLY OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVES "MEGAN'S LAW" EXTENSION

Just looking at the final, 78-0, vote, one would think that the Assembly session re-convened Monday, September 29, to act on legislation to prevent the expiration of California's version of "Megan's Law" was a quick and businesslike affair. One would be wrong.

In fact, the unanimous vote to approve [AB 1313](#) ([Parra](#)) only came after a two-hour Democratic Caucus, and another two hours of debate and speechmaking by members of both parties. For most of the session, in fact, it appeared that Assembly Republicans would withhold their support for the measure, as they had earlier on the final night of session.

The legislation adds three years to Megan's Law, which gives the public access to names and zip codes of sexual offenders. The law also will expand the program by allowing college police departments to release information about convicted sexual predators on campus. Republicans, and some Democrats, argued that the California version of the law was terribly flawed, and that more should be done than merely extending it. They said California

should join the 42 other states that make the information available on the internet.

Governor Davis signed AB 1313 into law on Wednesday, October 1.

BUDGET AGREEMENT EROSION

Cracks are appearing in the agreement reached by the Legislature last summer to address the state's budget crisis.

Last week, a Sacramento court held that one element of the budget deal, the sale of \$2 billion in bonds to fund the government's obligation to the state pension system this year, was violative of a provision of the state constitution which requires such matters to be submitted to the voters. The conservative Pacific Legal Foundation has also filed suit to prevent the state from going forward with a much larger, \$10.7 billion sale of deficit-reduction bonds that is the key to the budget agreement. State officials have expressed confidence that the second bond is structured in a way that is legal under the constitution, and will be upheld.

In addition, two candidates for governor, Tom McClintock and Arnold Schwarzenegger, have pledged to rescind the tripling of the state's vehicle license fee, an action that would reduce revenues by an additional \$4.2 billion. McClintock is also sponsoring an initiative to repeal the increase.

STATE BAR SECTIONS PROPOSE LEGISLATION FOR 2004

The Trusts & Estates, Business Law, and Family Law Sections of the State Bar have submitted a total of thirteen affirmative legislative proposals which they seek to sponsor and seek enactment of by the Legislature in 2004. The proposals are described on a posted [table](#) which includes links to the text of the proposals themselves.

State Bar sections sponsor legislation in their own name, to be lobbied exclusively with funds from voluntary sources, following review by the State Bar's Board of Governors to ensure that the proposals are germane and appropriate to the purposes of the sponsoring sections. The current crop of proposals will be reviewed by the Board's Committee on Stakeholder Relations on Friday, October 17, 2004, and by the full Board of Governors the following day. Comments or questions may be directed to Staff Attorney [Saul Bercovitch](#).